

COUNCIL OF STATE DEBATES

WEDNESDAY, 17th MARCH, 1926

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COUNCIL OF STATE.

Wednesday, 17th March, 1924

The Council met in the Council Chamber at Eleven of the Clock, the Honourable the President in the Chair.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

CRIMES AGAINST LIFE AND PROPERTY.

196. THE HONOURABLE RAI BAHADUR LALA RAM SARAN DAS: Will the Government be pleased to state, for the information of this House:

- (a) how many murders, culpable homicides not amounting to murder, dacoities and robberies were committed in India in each province during the last five years;
- (b) what was the percentage of convictions for each class of offence; and
- (c) to which classes did the offenders belong?

THE HONOURABLE MR. J. CRERAR: (a) and (b). The Honourable Member will be able to obtain the information from the Reports on the Police Administration of the various provinces.

(c) I do not quite understand to what classification the Honourable Member refers.

RUNNING OF A THROUGH FIRST AND SECOND CLASS BOGIE CARRIAGE ON THE MAIL BETWEEN HOWRAH AND LAHORE.

197. THE HONOURABLE RAI BAHADUR LALA RAM SARAN DAS: Is it a fact that the Advisory Committee of the North Western Railway urged the necessity of running a through first and second class bogie carriage between Howrah and Lahore by mail *via* Ambala? Is it also a fact that the Agent, North Western Railway, recommended it to the Agent, East Indian Railway? Will the Government kindly state what has been the result?

THE HONOURABLE MR. D. T. CHADWICK: I am glad that the Honourable Member has asked this question because I understand that he has objected to my referring him to the Agent or the Advisory Committee on Railways in many matters of detail regarding the running of Railways. This is clearly one of those matters of detail and I shall have much pleasure in handing to the Honourable Member an advertisement in the Calcutta newspapers of March 7th advertising a through Howrah-Peshawar service. This has been arranged without the knowledge or the intervention of the Railway Board.

BILL PASSED BY THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY LAID ON THE TABLE.

THE SECRETARY OF THE COUNCIL: Sir, in accordance with Rule 25 of the Indian Legislative Rules I lay on the table copies of a Bill to fix the duty on salt manufactured in, or imported by land into, certain parts of British India, to repeal the Cotton Duties Act, 1896, to fix maximum rates of postage under the Indian Post Office Act, 1898, further to amend the Indian Paper Currency Act, 1923, to fix rates of income-tax, and to provide for the appropriation of certain monies for the purpose of the reduction or avoidance of public debt, which was passed by the Legislative Assembly at its meeting held on the 16th March, 1926.

INDIAN SUCCESSION (AMENDMENT) BILL.

THE HONOURABLE SIR ARTHUR FROOM (Bombay Chamber of Commerce): Sir, I move for leave to introduce a Bill to amend the provisions of section 33 of the Indian Succession Act, 1925.

Many Honourable Members will remember that away back in September, 1924, I introduced a small Bill, very similar to the one which I now bring before this House. In March, 1925, my small Bill was referred to a Joint Committee of both Houses. In August, 1925, I presented to this House the Report of the Joint Committee and subsequently, in the same Session, I moved for leave to withdraw the Bill and the Bill was withdrawn. The reason for withdrawing the Bill did not arise out of any opposition to it. I should explain to Honourable Members that the Bill was running concurrently with a larger Bill to consolidate the law applicable to intestate and testamentary succession in British India. The larger Bill I might describe as the parent Bill, and, as was fit and proper, it got home first. Unfortunately, in getting home it squashed its infant. My small Bill was to amend the Indian Succession Act of 1865; the larger Bill by one of its Schedules repealed that Act and therefore it left my Bill to amend the section of an Act which no longer existed. Of course, that was an absurd position.

Now, Sir, I should explain that section 33 of the Indian Succession Act of 1925, which this Bill of mine seeks to amend, does not apply to the property of any Hindu, Muhammadan, Buddhist, Sikh or Jain, nor does it have any application to Parsis. But the section—section 33—does cover the property of intestate Indian Christians, and as there was some opposition, when my first Bill was referred to a Joint Committee, to its being made applicable to the estates of intestate Indian Christians, Honourable Members will see that in this new Bill, in sub-clause (5) of clause 3, it is specially laid down that it shall not apply to the property of Indian Christians. The result is that this small Bill of mine has relation only to Europeans and Anglo-Indians in this country.

Sir, the Statement of Objects and Reasons to this Bill makes it quite clear what I seek to arrive at. When the first Indian Succession Act was passed in the year 1865, it followed the lines of the English law as it then existed, that, in the event of a man dying without a will and of there being no lineal descendants, the widow took half of his property. The English law was amended later on to permit of the widow of a man who had no lineal descendants taking £500 out of his estate. If the estate was a small one and did not amount to £500, the widow took the whole

of the estate. If the estate exceeded £500 in value, she could claim the first £500 of that estate. When, however, the English Act was amended, the Indian Act was not altered on similar lines. The object of my Bill now is that the Indian Succession Act of 1925 should be amended to provide for the case of widows succeeding to small estates when the husband has died without a will and when there are no lineal descendants. I have not, however, put into the Bill a sum exactly equivalent to £500. I have suggested Rs. 5,000 which I think Honourable Members will recognise as a reasonable sum. In the case of very small estates I think it would be a hardship to a widow to succeed to only half the amount. When my first Bill was circulated, it was received in all the provinces with approval, with one exception, that it was not liked in so far as it then applied to Indian Christians. I have shown to Honourable Members of this House that this new Bill of mine removes that defect and it will not apply to Indian Christians; it will only apply to Europeans and Anglo-Indians in this country. I think it might interest Honourable Members of this House if I read a short extract from a letter from the Secretary of the Anglo-Indian and Domiciled European Association, Bengal. This letter says:

"My Council desire in the first place to express their appreciation and gratefulness to the Honourable Member for the proposed Bill which will certainly afford substantial relief."

I hope I have made the object of this Bill quite clear to the House and I trust that my motion for leave to introduce it will be agreed to by everybody.

The motion was adopted.

THE HONOURABLE SIR ARTHUR FROMM: I introduce the Bill.

MESSAGE OF GRATITUDE FROM THE COUNCIL OF STATE TO THEIR EXCELLENCIES THE EARL AND COUNTESS OF READING.

THE HONOURABLE SARDAR CHARANJIT SINGH (Punjab: Nominated Non-Official): Sir, I beg to move:

"That this Council do convey to Their Excellencies the Earl of Reading, Viceroy and Governor General of India, and the Countess of Reading on the eve of their departure from India, the humble expression of the Council's grateful appreciation of and heartfelt gratitude for all that Their Excellencies have done for India."

I am sure in doing so I am voicing the feelings of the whole Council. It is, therefore, hardly necessary for me to make a long speech in commending my motion for the acceptance of this House.

Not only had His Excellency's fame as an eminent judge of exceptional ability, as a sound financier, and as an experienced administrator preceded him to India, but we know that long before he came out to India His Excellency had laid India under a debt of gratitude by his successful mission to America. We know that as Ambassador to the United States he persuaded the Government of that country to place at India's disposal all the silver necessary to prevent a crisis here.

He is the first Lord Chief Justice of England to exchange a high post at home for the hard and arduous work in India. The expectations which were raised by his appointment were very high indeed. They are equalled

[Sardar Charanjit Singh.]

only by the remarkable success which he has achieved. Who does not remember the dark clouds which overcast the Indian horizon when His Excellency, the Earl of Reading, assumed the Viceroyalty, and who will deny the great change which has since taken place? Heavy storms of violent and harmful propaganda were raging in the midst of angry surges of unrest and disorder. Non-co-operation was rampant, Muslim opinion was considerably agitated over the Khilafat, the financial situation due to war was at its lowest ebb, the economic problem was its worst, and the industrial state of the country was a matter of the deepest concern. The great Reforms under which we are meeting here to-day were in danger. Therefore, the task before him was of unusual delicacy and exceptional complexity. But we know how he approached it. He approached it with that sympathy and good-will which we had been led to expect of him and which alone afforded the solution. Through the wise and statesmanlike policy pursued by His Excellency the situation in all these respects has improved, and improved beyond all expectations. In the matter of the Khilafat Lord Reading's Government displayed the greatest tact, judgment and foresight. It is obvious that no amount of political agitation in India could have solved an international dispute, but so well conceived and so well directed were the efforts of His Excellency that a satisfactory solution was reached.

With regard to non-co-operation, when one had begun to despair of the general public opinion returning to saner channels, in which it had always run, there came the farsighted and statesmanlike policy of His Excellency's Government which enabled the people to see things in their proper perspective, to abandon their extreme demands and to revert to sober modes of thought.

The troubles I have referred to would have constituted an extraordinary burden for the shoulders of any Governor General, but when one thinks of the economic, industrial and financial depression which was prevailing over the country in 1921 one is left to wonder how the present improved situation is brought about. There has been a remarkable revival in trade, the industries of the country are steadily improving, and in the domain of finance the improvement has exceeded the most optimistic calculations. When owing to the war a series of deficit Budgets had cast a gloom over the country one could hardly imagine where the increasing taxation would land the people. But to-day we are all rejoicing over a second prosperity Budget. The severest critics of the Government will not be able to withhold from His Excellency's Government the credit which is due to them for the manner in which the finances of the country have improved. It has been possible to raise large loans without going to foreign markets, and India's credit has risen high in the world. It is particularly gratifying to notice that although no direct reduction has taken place in taxes, it has been possible to make remissions in provincial contributions and to send a message of hope to the nation-building departments which, under the Government of India Act, are the special care of the Ministers in the Provinces.

The great Reforms had been characterised by a certain section as unsatisfactory, inadequate and disappointing. One section of the politically-minded classes had stood aside from the new Legislatures. The atmosphere in which the Reforms were inaugurated could not have been

more depressing. No wonder, then, that some people thought that the Reforms were dead before they were born. But the last five years present incontrovertible proofs of the success of the Reforms and clearly show that the Reforms have not been by any means inadequate or disappointing. To take only some of the achievements of the last five years, repressive laws have gone, and with them the Press Act which was an eyesore alike to advanced politicians and to journalists in this country. The policy of protection has been adopted, and a very old demand has been complied with. The help it has given to the principal national industry and the manner in which it has saved it from extinction is in itself one of the greatest results of the opportunities which were thrown open to the people of this country. The commercialization of Railways and the separation of the Railway finance and accounts from General finance and accounts, have not only begun to tell but are full of even greater possibilities. In the field of labour legislation considerable progress has been made which ought to more than satisfy the band of workers who are devoting themselves to labour problems. At the expense of a considerable amount of revenue, and in what looks like a complete reversal of the policy of the past, restriction on the cultivation of opium has been stiffened and stiffened until we are in sight of its total abolition. I shall take just one more instance, namely, the abolition of the cotton excise duty, with the removal of which I hope the last complaint regarding the inclusion of "tainted money" in the Indian revenues has gone. This action of the Government has removed one of the oldest grievances, and while I refrain from dwelling on its economic and other aspects I trust that all classes of people will recognise the genuineness of His Excellency's desire to meet all the legitimate desires of the people.

Sir, we equally dedicate our respect and gratitude to Her Excellency the Countess of Reading who has shown by her own munificence and personal influence, genuine sympathy and great solicitude for the amelioration of human suffering and for the welfare of the women and children of India. I make bold to say that Her Excellency has rendered a service not only to the present but also to the future generations, the precise value of which one cannot exaggerate. Her Excellency's name will be remembered with gratitude for generations to come and as schemes which have been initiated under her auspices continue to be worked in the proper spirit, as I am sure they will be, the contribution will be as great a source of satisfaction to Her Excellency as it will be of inestimable happiness to the people of this country. By her many acts of kindness, gracefulness, amiability, and boundless hospitality Her Excellency has won our unbounded esteem and sincere admiration.

In conclusion, I claim that His Excellency Lord Reading will have a foremost place in the ranks of India's Viceroys. I have said enough in justification of my claim—and I desire to tell my friends across the seas that Lord Reading in all that he has done to satisfy Indian opinion, has also succeeded in cementing the British connection. He has secured the contentment of the services and restimulated the recruitment of Englishmen, which promises to be as great an asset to Indian progress as it would be a means of strengthening the British connection. It has been given to few of our foremost men to realize within so short a period the success of their policy and to see the justification for their actions and their measures. To His Excellency Lord Reading has been given the unique satisfaction of having witnessed the complete success of his

[Sardar Charanjit Singh.]

policy, his actions, and his measures in all departments of life. I am sure that His Excellency's Viceroyalty will be one of the brightest chapters in the glorious annals of British history in India.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HAROON JAFFER (Bombay Presidency : Muhammadian) : Sir, it is to me a great pleasure to be in this House to-day and thus to have an opportunity to speak in support of this motion. As the representative of a Muslim constituency, I shall speak specially as a Muslim, and of the great debt of gratitude which we Indian Muslims owe to His Excellency the whole world knows. When our hearts were torn with anxiety about the fate of our co-religionists in Turkey after the Great War, on what did we rely, for the effective expression of our fears and our desires? On the sympathy of His Excellency and his Government. Lord Reading brought the whole weight of his great position to bear in order that our sentiment should effectively be expressed, and how successfully he achieved our desire, was shown by the revision of the Treaty of Sevres. His Excellency, in assisting to bring about that act of justice, performed a service to the Empire and to the peace of the world.

We Muslims throughout India have also reason to be grateful to His Excellency for the noble-hearted way he has followed the path set by his illustrious predecessor, Lord Minto, in specially caring for the interests of the Muslim minority in India. I shall not refer to this subject at length. This would not be the time for so doing. The anxiety which the question is at the present moment causing all us Muslims is well known. But we believe that our minority has had a true and real friend in His Excellency, and in this respect we regard his Viceroyalty as one more proof that we as a minority community may place in British statesmanship our trust that in whatever constitutional developments take place in India it will assure justice to Muslim claims for justice and fair dealing.

There is one other aspect of His Excellency's labours about which I wish to say a few words. It is his efforts to save the lives and honour of our fellow-subjects of His Majesty in South Africa. In this matter I speak not only as an Indian and as a Muslim Indian, but specially as a Muslim of Western India, for the Muslim Indians in South Africa are chiefly drawn from the Bombay Presidency. I recognise the difficulties which the Indian question gives the Union Government. The Union Government would, if our Government had not put up a splendid fight, have carried forward measures to solve it which would have worked inhumanly against our countrymen. Lord Reading has been our true champion against such oppression. The results he has achieved in the face of great obstacles deserve our grateful acknowledgments. And here, Sir, let me add one word which I hope will not seem ungracious in the moment of thanksgiving. The struggle in South Africa is not yet over, and we earnestly trust that when His Excellency reaches the shores of England, he will still continue to use his great influence in our behalf. The interest which His Excellency has taken in Muslim education is also well known. The sympathetic speech he made at the Aligarh University last year will not be forgotten by Muslims all over India. The reservation of one-third of the Government posts for the backward communities was a step in the right direction for which we are highly grateful to His Excellency.

Sir, we wish—I speaking for my constituents join in the wish—long life and happiness to His Excellency. And in this prayer we must also mention the name of Her Excellency, whose noble work for Indian women we gratefully recognise and whose gracious presence at Viceregal Lodge has been a blessing to us all.

THE HONOURABLE SIR BIJAY CHAND MAHTAB, MAHARAJADHIRAJA BAHADUR OF BURDWAN (Bengal: Nominated Non-Official): Sir, in spite of the fact that the Viceroy of India is hemmed in with everything that makes for a splendid isolation, because the Viceroy happens to be a human being he can rise above that splendid isolation and within the short period of five years allotted to him in India can make friends in the land to which he comes. I do not wish to repeat the many things that His Excellency the Earl of Reading has done for India as Viceroy and Governor General: for the constitution is such that he cannot take credit entirely, as the Government over which he presides is part and parcel of that Viceroyalty, particularly of the Governor Generalship. But there cannot be any doubt that Lord Reading's great personality, his charm of manner, his personal fascination and his great forcefulness are things which were an asset to India: and to-day, when the time has come for His Excellency to leave India, we can safely assert that not only are many of us going to lose a personal friend, but that India is going to lose one of its most distinguished Viceroys. Now that he has waded through many of the troublous waters, for troublous waters there are and will be so long as a country and its people aim at the goal of liberation, it must be a satisfaction to His Excellency the Viceroy that in spite of bitterness in some quarters, in spite of adverse criticisms, he has had the bulk of the saner mind of India at his beck and call. It cannot, however, be denied that in spite of constitutional shortcomings, the personality of the Viceroy does go a great way to make things smooth in India, and we cannot deny that Lord Reading's personality has gone a great length to pacify troubles, to satisfy the grievances of minorities or otherwise, and I therefore gladly associate myself with the Resolution that the Honourable Sardar Charanjit Singh has brought before the Council of State to-day.

I also associate myself with the chorus of praise that has been very rightly given to Her Excellency the Countess of Reading, for her interest in the welfare of the women and children of India has not only been genuine, but it has been of a nature which will, I am sure, in years to come, have very great and beneficial results. I therefore heartily support the motion which has just been moved.

THE HONOURABLE RAJA SIR RAMPAL SINGH (United Provinces, Central: Non-Muhammadan): Sir, I beg to associate myself with the motion and the observations that have fallen from the lips of my Honourable colleagues in support of it. India is a vast country with divergent, sometimes discordant and antagonistic, interests to deal with. If one succeeds in steering the vessel of State administration in troubled waters to a calmer and more tranquil atmosphere, one is surely worthy of great praise and gratefulness. The conditions which prevailed in India when His Excellency took the reins of his office and the conditions which exist at the present time show a remarkable change for the better, and one is bound to appreciate fully the services rendered by His Excellency. It was an irony of fate that His Excellency had to contend with very abnormal times resulting

[Sir Rampal Singh.]

from the after effects of the Great War and other causes, and great credit is due to His Excellency for achieving so much success in such adverse circumstances. Our annual Budgets were deficit Budgets. Our income was contracting, while our expenditure was mounting up immensely, and our provinces were smarting under the Meston Award and beneficial services were not only suffering but were starving. Sir, it is in his regime that things have taken a turn for the better, and the provinces have got relief from the provincial contributions, though not to the fullest extent as they desired. In many other directions, in matters of policy, there is a remarkable change for greater progress, and we are bound to thank sincerely and honestly His Excellency for what has been done.

Sir, it is not for me to go into details and to recapitulate the history of the five years of His Excellency's Viceroyalty which is about to close. Suffice it to say, that His Excellency very earnestly applied his head and heart to do good to India to the best of his abilities, and the foundation which he has laid has been laid truly with the best of motives for the uplift of India to a higher level.

Sir, we are also very grateful to Her Excellency the Countess of Reading for the genuine affection and devotion and for her sympathy with the women and children of India, and for what she has done to ameliorate the condition of children. With these words, Sir, I support the Resolution and wish that Their Excellencies may have a safe voyage, and pray that their interest in India may not abate when they go back to England.

THE HONOURABLE SIR ARTHUR FROMM (Bombay Chamber of Commerce): Sir, I wish to associate myself with the motion moved by my Honourable friend Sardar Charanjit Singh.

In reading the speech that was made the other day by Lord Irwin, I was very much struck with one sentence. He said: "If the Viceroy gets the blame when things go badly, then let us give him credit when things go better". Now, Sir, that is found in all walks of life. When anything goes wrong, whether it be his fault or not, the whole blame is thrown at the head of the administration. At the same time when things go smoothly and straight we very seldom hear any praise given to that man, and it is for that reason that I heartily associate myself with the Resolution which has been brought forward by my Honourable friend. It will make known throughout India generally that this Council does appreciate the great work of Lord Reading in this country. There may have been times when there were differences of opinion between His Excellency and some Members of the Legislature, but whatever differences of opinion there may have been. I think no one would deny that His Excellency Lord Reading has pursued his course as Viceroy in this country with a singlemindedness of purpose, and that purpose has been for the good and welfare of India.

Sir, I also would like to associate myself with the observations made by the previous speakers with regard to Her Excellency the Countess of Reading. Not always enjoying the best of health, Her Excellency has never spared herself in promoting and forwarding any movement for the benefit of her own sex, and for the benefit of little children in this country. As a speaker before me said, her work in this direction will live for many generations and it will undoubtedly bear good fruit in time to come. I think we should all feel very deeply grateful to Her Excellency for the

work she has done in this as well as in many other directions. Finally, Sir, we shall miss Her Excellency from the Viceregal Lodge whether at Delhi or in Simla. We all of us have enjoyed great hospitality when we have visited Viceregal Lodge. We have been received by their Excellencies not only as Viceroy and as the wife of the Viceroy, but we have been received by a kindly host and a gracious hostess. We shall miss them very greatly when they go.

Sir, I have nothing else to say except to wish their Excellencies all good luck and every happiness in their future in England on their retirement from this country.

THE HONOURABLE COLONEL NAWAB SIR UMAR HAYAT KHAN (Punjab: Nominated Non-Official): Sir, we are very thankful to Sardar Charanjit Singh who has brought this appropriate motion in this House to-day. All that His Excellency has done has been enumerated already, and I will not repeat them except to say this much that India is in a far better condition now than when His Excellency took over office. The Resolution deals with those things which have been done by His Excellency. These have been already enumerated. But I appreciate His Excellency also for those things which he has not done and those are some of the things which an irresponsible minority want to wring out of the Government by threats of non-co-operation, etc. When such challenges are given by the above class, Sir, it is not good for the country, just as we had at the time of the Rowlatt Act, there is a possibility of trouble and then some of the responsible people have to come forward to quell it. As a Muhammadan, Sir, I want to associate myself with what has been said by my Muhammadan friend here before me. I have to thank His Excellency also for many a kindness which he has shown to me personally. I think Lady Reading has done equally well in helping the womanhood of India in all the branches in which it was possible to help it. With these few remarks, Sir, I heartily support this motion and pray for His Excellency's long life and safe return to England and hope also that he will take just as keen an interest in India's welfare as he has done while here.

THE HONOURABLE MAJOR NAWAB MAHOMED AKBAR KHAN (North-West Frontier Province: Nominated Non-Official): Sir, I congratulate my Honourable friend Sardar Charanjit Singh on bringing this most appropriate and opportune motion, which has enabled us to express our feelings with regard to Their Excellencies the Earl and Countess of Reading. The Honourable Members of the House might recollect that in 1921 the political atmosphere here was not clear by any means. The non-co-operation, Khilafat and other agitations in this land were in full swing. The new system of the reformed constitution was charged with bitterness and animosity at the very outset. It is unnecessary to repeat the difficulties it encountered from the moment of its birth. They are still fresh in our minds. Suffice it to say that there was a determined opposition to it from certain sections of the community. It was under such circumstances of exceptional difficulties that His Excellency the Earl of Reading was sent to India charged with the duty of establishing the reformed constitution and thus assisting the country along the road of advance mapped out in the Government of India Act, 1919. It is a source of gratification to me, and so I think it must be to the Honourable Members of the House, to see that at the time of his departure there is no anxious crisis arising in India and the administration is carried on smoothly and efficiently.

[Nawab Mahomed Akbar Khan.]

Sir, as my province of the North West Frontier comes under the direct control of His Excellency's Government, I consider it my duty to express, on behalf of the population of that province, my gratitude to His Excellency for the general peace and prosperity that that province has enjoyed during His Excellency's time. It has been comparatively more peaceful in these five years, during which many useful works have been constructed. The Khyber Railway has been constructed and thrown open to the public. A Grand Trunk road has also been constructed up to Razmak. Both these useful works have brought sufficient money to the inhabitants of the North West Frontier Province and it is hoped that these highways will naturally bring civilisation to the tribesmen in the administered tract and across it within the Durand Line. These people are all one and the same people, called Pathans in India, Afghans in Afghanistan and Sulamani in Arabia. They are all of one and the same descent.

Again, Sir, it is hoped that His Excellency the Viceroy will very shortly open another useful work in Peshawar in the shape of a hospital. A telegraphic line from Peshawar to Kohat during the Durrah has been opened along with several post offices throughout the province, and it is hoped that others that have been asked for and which are under consideration of the Government of India will also be opened in the near future. Last though not the least the people of the North-West Frontier Province are highly grateful to His Excellency the Earl of Reading for his kindness in granting representation to that Province, in both the Houses of the central Legislature. Sir, a good deal has been done on the Frontier during His Excellency the Earl of Reading's time and it is hoped that a good deal will be contemplated during the time of his successor, Lord Irwin. The construction of canals and railways and other useful works will give plenty of work to the residents of the North-West Frontier Province. The most notable of these things, which will stand as a land-mark in the history of India and which is expected to remind visitors from nearly the whole of the world of the august administration in India of His Excellency the Earl of Reading, as already observed, is the construction of the Khyber Railway and the Grand Trunk Road to Razmak. The inhabitants of the North-West Frontier Province are deeply grateful to His Excellency the Viceroy and his Government for the bold measures which have prompted them in taking up these useful works.

Before resuming my seat, Sir, I must express my sense of gratitude to their Excellencies the Viceroy and the Countess of Reading for the kind hospitality that they have been so gracious to extend to both the representatives from the North-West Frontier Province. We wish Their Excellencies a long, useful and prosperous life so that Their Excellencies may help the people of the North-West Frontier Province, after their departure from this country, in the deliberations of this most important question of the Frontier in responsible quarters in England.

THE HONOURABLE SIR MUHAMMAD HABIBULLAH (Member for Education, Health and Lands): Sir, I deem it a proud privilege and peculiar pleasure as Leader of the House to associate myself with the Resolution which has been so ably moved by my noble friend Sardar Charanjit Singh. Other Honourable Members have also paid graceful tribute expressing their sense of grateful appreciation of and heartfelt gratitude

for all that Their Excellencies have done for India during the memorable five years which are about to close. Of the progress that has taken place in the various branches of administrative activities during the present Viceroyalty I do not propose to say anything. It has already been so aptly and eloquently referred to by those who preceded me that I shall not attempt to recapitulate the same. I would merely like at this juncture to lay special emphasis on the beneficent labours of Their Excellencies Lord and Lady Reading in the sphere which touches the lives of the humblest in the land. Immersed as we are in the consideration of administrative and political requirements, it is only too common to ignore those activities which may not catch the eye or appeal to the imagination but which none the less are vital to the happiness and welfare of the millions of this country. Whenever any work was undertaken to relieve suffering and to bring light to those who live in the shadow of affliction, Their Excellencies have been in the forefront, inspiring by their example and giving that help that only those in Their Excellencies' position can give. We all remember that a year ago His Excellency launched an appeal for funds for work in connection with leprosy. I shall not forget the fervour of that appeal and I can affirm that it is His Excellency's personal labours in that direction which brought such marvellous success and enabled work of such wonderful possibilities to be started and financed. A sum of approximately Rs. 20 lakhs was collected for the furtherance of this great philanthropic work. This is only one of His Excellency's many beneficent activities.

Of Her Excellency's work in India I need hardly say much. The National Baby Week owes the living force of its appeal to Her Excellency's example and precept. Those who have seen the large crowds wending their way to the demonstration given during this Week at Delhi can have no doubt of the change that is being steadily wrought in the popular attitude towards those problems which affect infant mortality and health, and consequently of the infinite possibilities of improvement in national well-being and efficiency which this change promises. Let me say one word of Their Excellencies' acts of private and personal kindness done without ostentation, and I may say almost with secrecy. I know of more than one such instance, but I would be betraying confidence if I were to be more explicit. It is sufficient to say that these acts will endear them not only to those who have been the direct beneficiaries thereof, but to those who have, in spite of the secrecy maintained, come to know something of the depth of human sympathy that resides in the hearts of Their Excellencies.

THE HONOURABLE MR. K. C. ROY (Bengal: Nominated Non-Official): I agree, if I may say so with respect, with the weighty observations that have fallen from the Honourable the Leader of the House. I know his handicaps: he is, after all is said and done, an official and tied down by the position and privilege of his office. But I am absolutely a free man and I know from personal knowledge that during the Viceroyalty which is about to close His Excellency has done his best to cleanse the Statute-book of the repressive laws, and if His Excellency had been allowed to have his own way the obnoxious Regulation would have been modified to suit the needs of the present-day administration. His Excellency has promoted the cause of self-government in this country despite many trying circumstances. He has firmly laid the foundation of national defence: he has put forward a scheme for the re-organisation of the

[Mr K. C. Roy.]

Territorial Army; he has formulated a scheme for the Indianisation of the Army in the higher ranks, and recently he has been instrumental in creating a Royal Navy for India. In the domain of finance and commerce he has accepted nearly all the recommendations of the Tariff Board and has laid down once for all legitimate protection for India's industries against unfair competition. In foreign policy whose control and direction has been in his hands, he has given India the benefit of a lasting treaty with His Majesty the Amir of Afghanistan and also an equally fair and just treaty with His Majesty the King of Nepal. He is leaving India with our frontiers fully well-guarded, with her neighbours happy and contented, and internally happy and prosperous. I have been a member of the Lady Reading Women of India Association since its inception and I know that Her Excellency, ill or well, has always endeavoured to promote the cause of medical aid for Indian womanhood. The consolidated fund which is known as the Lady Reading Fund will bear unstinted testimony to her efforts, sagacity and administration. I join the Honourable Sir Arthur Froom in wishing Their Excellencies God-speed and all good luck, and I would only request them to continue to take the same interest in Indian affairs as they have taken during their stay at Viceregal Lodge in Simla and Delhi. I support the proposition which has been moved by my Honourable friend, Sardar Charanjit Singh.

THE HONOURABLE SIR DINSHAW WACHA (Bombay: Nominated Non-Official): I beg to add my sincere tribute of appreciation so eloquently expressed by many speakers before me in reference to one of the most distinguished Viceroys and Governors General whom it has been the good fortune of India to have and who is now on the eve of his retirement. My own belief is that to the many brilliant pages of British Indian history contributed by a long succession of distinguished Viceroys in the past, His Excellency Lord Reading has contributed another and a brighter one, a page which will in every way redound not only to his credit but to the credit of the British people and to the genius of the Anglo-Saxon race. I do not wish to travel over the same ground that has been covered by many of the speakers who have preceded me in such eloquent terms; but I do say this, that perhaps no Viceroy and Governor General had to encounter greater difficulties at the outset than Lord Reading when he assumed the reins of his exalted office, difficulties of a colossal magnitude, save the ever-to-be-lamented Lord Canning. In the days of Lord Canning the Government of India was trembling in the balance and it was a question whether the British would maintain their power in this country. But happily Lord Canning's patience and tolerance, his clemency, and, above all, his far-sighted statesmanship saved the country, brought it to a haven of safety and rest, and laid the foundations afresh of a new British Indian Empire which of course the genius of Lord Clive had originally founded. But since those days there have been very many able Viceroys—each of whom has during his own tenure of office conferred great benefits on India in different directions, moral and material. But it must be said to the credit of Lord Reading that he is the one Viceroy and Governor General who came out to India at a time when the country was seething with sedition and torn with unrest as was never witnessed before. But we are glad to see that to-day, despite the many troubles and upheavals, that unrest has been greatly laid low and tranquillity has once more been restored. That his administration has been one of the

most difficult, eventful and memorable in the annals of British India. I think none will deny. It is not my object here to go into the administrative and financial questions and many other problems that were waiting to be solved and which he has so successfully and ably solved during the last five years. Questions of policy of the greatest moment, problems of finance which might have overwhelmed any other Viceroy, have all been solved. This alone is enough to entitle him to the gratitude of the country and its people. It is the great good fortune of Lord Reading that he had (I cannot refrain from saying) in the Honourable Sir Basil Blackett a Finance Minister of the highest talents who has saved India from the Niagara of deficits and brought her on safe and sure ground and on the foundation of which she can henceforward courageously proceed to build her finances with the greatest security and safety.

Sir, only the future historian of India can really record his impartial verdict on the many memorable events and great outstanding features of Lord Reading's administration and on the exceptional ability, force of character and practical statesmanship he displayed therein. We, who are his contemporaries can hardly appreciate to its fullest and freest extent all that Lord Reading has been able to achieve during the past five years of his Viceroyalty. It was a most difficult Viceroyalty, and we do not know what internal evidence there may be which may be available fifty years hence to assess its value and appreciate its significance. What he has done or has not done can be then known only. Superficial critics here and there and in newspapers scream aloud at one thing or another of his Governor Generalship and blame him unnecessarily and without foundation. They reproach him for what he is in no way responsible for at all. Such criticisms we must be prepared to hear. We have read the lives of many a Viceroy from which we are now able to unlearn many wrong and unfounded statements and learn many more which modify our judgment. The real springs of action which were at work during the last 5 years will never be known during Lord Reading's lifetime. It was the case with many Governors General, specially Lord Dalhousie. In the same way I say that as far as we are concerned, we who are Lord Reading's contemporaries and who are swayed by current biases and prejudices cannot really pass an impartial verdict—we shall not be able to determine the true character of his Viceroyalty. But we can unhesitatingly express our opinion that so far as *known facts* are concerned Lord Reading has deserved well, aye nobly and richly of the country which he has ruled with such fearless courage and consummate ability. No doubt Viceroys there have been, such as Lord Mayo, Lord Ripon, Lord Minto and Lord Hardinge—who are greatly remembered for their beneficent administration. But I do say this that when we remember all the salient characteristics of Lord Reading's Viceroyalty we shall have to say in all justice to him that he proved himself to be one of the greatest in the annals of British India. I think, Sir, he has reared a monument of his own, more durable than brass and the Pyramids of Egypt. What Lord Reading has done will be inscribed in history in letters of gold—what he has done for its people patiently, perseveringly and courageously with the eye of the statesman looking far ahead into the future. India will appreciate later on better and better what Lord Reading has done. Therefore, I will say that when to-day we accord our sincere tribute of praise for what he has done, we do nothing more than render justice to his administration, and I am very glad to see that in this House with its serene

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atmosphere, there is not heard *one* single discordant voice in making reference to His Excellency's beneficent work.

And what shall I say of the good Lady Reading? All that has been said in this place shows that Lady Reading has done an immense amount of philanthropic work for the better social condition and health of the people, even in a larger way than the wives of former Viceroy's from Lady Dufferin downwards. Her work for the relief of suffering humanity is writ large which he who runs may read. She has instituted new hospitals, new sources for relieving suffering humanity, particularly of Indian women and children. I think, that as far as Lady Reading is concerned, we can unhesitatingly say of her that she has proved herself a typical English woman of the deepest sympathy and solicitude for her Indian sisters, that she is indeed the type of the holiest and divine womanhood. As to Lord Reading's genial and benign personality, his unvarying courtesy and to Lady Reading's gracious hospitality which one and all of us have received, I do not think there can be any difference of opinion in the country. Indeed I do not hesitate to say that both Lord and Lady Reading have won the esteem and regard of all who have come into contact with their personalities. And speaking of Lord Reading I do believe, Sir, that when the true history of his Viceroyalty comes to be written, Indians will have reason to remember it with gratitude and affection.

THE HONOURABLE MAHARAJADHIRAJA SIR RAMESHWARA SINGH OF DARBHANGA (Bihar and Orissa: Non-Muhammadan): Sir, I rise on my own behalf as well as on behalf of my Province to give grateful expression to our sense of gratitude for His Excellency Lord Reading's benefactions to India.

Sir, I can sincerely say that Lord Reading's Viceroyalty will always form a land-mark in the history of India. As we all know, Sir, Lord Reading's prominent part in connection with the Lausanne Treaty has placed not only India but the whole Muslim world under a deep debt of gratitude to His Lordship. His sympathies with the South African Indians and his personal efforts to ameliorate their plight are too well known to require any special mention here. But what will always distinguish Lord Reading's régime from all other periods, is the wonderful manner in which he has preserved the tranquillity of this vast Continent during a particularly troublous time to which I need not refer in detail on this occasion. Lord Reading has not only piloted his administrative ship through surging tides with signal success, but has removed some of those grievances of India which would have required far-sighted and vigilant statesmanship at any time. Among such measures of far-reaching effect, I may cite "Balanced Budgets", that much-longed for reduction of the provincial contributions and the abolition of the cotton cess. These things have earned for His Lordship a really dear place in the innermost heart of India, and I look forward to the day in the near future when the lead given by His Lordship will be taken up by his successor and provincial contributions will become a thing of the past.

But, this is not all. It was reserved for Lord Reading's régime to witness the satisfactory solution of that old cry, the reduction in military expenditure, and, Sir, the establishment of the Tariff Board has put a

stamp on His Lordship's claim to the gratitude not only of Indians but of all those interested in the industrial stability of India; and his name will be handed down from generation to generation for it is in our industrial revival that all our hopes for the future of India lie.

Sir, the announcement recently made regarding the foundation of an Indian Navy is a measure which will immortalise His Lordship's name; for without a Navy, Sir, there can be no self-protecting India, and Sir, I need hardly say that unless India can protect herself, she cannot govern herself. Sir, the King's representative who has boldly taken this step is a true statesman entitled to the sincerest gratitude not only of the people of India but of England also. Sir, connected with this question is the appointment of the Sandhurst Committee, and I will say only this that it will be for His Lordship's successor to fulfil those expectations which have already been formed in this direction.

Sir, I cannot conclude without alluding to the Royal Commission on the Indian Services, popularly known as the Lee Commission, which handed in its Report to Lord Reading's Government and I fervently hope that His Lordship will tell his successor that the step initiated by him in respect of Indianisation has only been commenced and it will remain for his successor to do the needful in this direction.

Sir, last of all, though not the least, it is my privilege to refer to His Lordship's unvarying courtesy at all times to Indians and his willingness to help them even individually. Sir, it is one of the greatest functions of the King's representative to be accessible to his people and it cannot be denied that Lord Reading has fulfilled it. Sir, the announcement of the Agricultural Commission towards the closing days of Lord Reading's Viceroyalty is yet another proof of his solicitude for the voiceless millions of India, and if properly handled, Sir, it will uplift the masses much more soundly and effectively than any other movement yet heard of for that purpose.

And, Sir, we all know how helpful Lady Reading has been to her husband throughout his period of Indian administration. There has been no movement connected with women's and children's welfare with which Her Excellency has not identified herself. The Red Cross Society, the Baby Weeks and the various nursing homes and women's sections of hospitals in the country will ever bear testimony to Her Ladyship's indelible work for the benefit of Indian women and children. In fact, His Lordship's work would not have been complete without Her Ladyship's active interest in the welfare of Indians. There is nobody in India who has come in contact with Government House without being struck by Her Ladyship's charmingly ennobling personality, and we all hope that Her Ladyship will continue to evince the same interest in the people of India from England as she has done during the period of His Excellency's Viceroyalty in India.

With these words, Sir, I most cordially support the Honourable Sardar Charanjit Singh's motion, and heartily wish that this Council do convey to their Excellencies the Earl of Reading, Governor General of India, and the Countess of Reading on the eve of their departure from India the humble expression of the Council's grateful appreciation and heartfelt gratitude for all that their Excellencies have done for India and pray God Almighty to vouchsafe to their Excellencies a long life and ever-increasing prosperity. I hope our Viceroy will carry with him very many

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pleasant memories during his stay in our country and let us cherish the hope that His Excellency will always, like a true lover of India, endeavour to uplift and place her amidst the self-governing nations of the world.

THE HONOURABLE RAJA SRI RAWU SWETACHALAPATI RAMAKRISHNA RANGA RAO BAHADUR OF BOBBILI (Madras: Nominated Non-Official): Sir, I rise wholeheartedly to support the motion moved by the Honourable Sardar Charanjit Singh. On behalf of my Presidency generally, and particularly on behalf of the landholders of Madras, I express our gratitude to Their Excellencies for all the good they have done to this country. I shall be only repeating what has already been so ably expressed on the floor of this House if I attempt to enumerate the many good and noble acts of Their Excellencies in this country. Although His Excellency is so shortly to lay down the reins of his high office we hope and trust that His Excellency will continue to take a keen and lively interest in Indian affairs when he returns to England. I now join with other Honourable Members in wishing God-speed and good-luck to Their Excellencies.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: Honourable Members are aware that there is a provision in the Standing Orders which enables the President to speak on any motion before the House. It is an advantage, of which the Chair has rarely availed itself, but I welcome it now as giving me an opportunity to associate myself with the motion before the House. There are obvious limitations on what can be said from the Chair, and I am not proposing to address the House on the subject of the administration of His Excellency Lord Reading as Governor General of India. But as one who has been associated with both the Viceroy and Her Excellency Lady Reading from the moment of their arrival in India till the present moment, I might be deemed guilty of ingratitude if I did not speak of what I know. From the date of Lord Reading's assumption of office, it was my privilege for nearly four years to attend on him weekly and to work with him and under him, and the House may perhaps realise with what trepidation, I, as Secretary in the Legislative Department, ventured to lay before an *ex-Lord* Chief Justice the opinion of the Legislative Department on a legal matter then under the consideration of the Government of India. But I shall always be grateful for the sympathetic and helpful attitude which His Excellency invariably adopted in connection with matters which it was my duty to lay before him. Since His Excellency did me the honour to appoint me to the Chair of this House, I have naturally officially come very little into contact with him. I have, however, been associated with him. The Honourable the Leader of the House referred in eloquent terms a short time ago to the appeal which His Excellency inaugurated in connection with the campaign against leprosy, and I have for several months now had the privilege of assisting His Excellency as Chairman of the Executive Committee in the administration of the fund. The possibilities of the scheme which His Excellency has inaugurated stagger the imagination, and it is only for the future to realise what in that respect His Excellency has done for India.

I have had the privilege also, since I ceased to hold an official post, of close association with Her Excellency. Her Excellency's activities, her whole-heartedness and her energy have been referred to on every side of the House. It is a remarkable thing—no, those who know Her Excellency will realise that “remarkable” is not the right word—but it is a

fact deserving of comment that those who have worked with Her Excellency know that she displays in the administration of funds which she inherited from her predecessors just as great an interest and that she labours just as hard as in the administration of those funds which she herself has inaugurated, and which have naturally been nearest to her heart. The future generation will realise fully what they owe to Their Excellencies the Earl and the Countess of Reading. I am glad that this Council has taken this opportunity to express its sense of gratitude. I am now putting the motion to the House, and I would suggest that as soon as I have read it, all Honourable Members who support the motion, should rise in their places.

The question is:

“That the following motion be adopted:

‘That this Council do convey to Their Excellencies the Earl of Reading, Viceroy and Governor General of India, and the Countess of Reading on the eve of their departure from India, the humble expression of the Council’s grateful appreciation of and heartfelt gratitude for all that Their Excellencies have done for India.’”

The motion was carried unanimously, all Honourable Members standing.

The Council then adjourned till Eleven of the Clock on Friday, the 19th March, 1926.

Copies of the Debates of the Legislative Assembly and of the Council of State are obtainable on sale from the Manager, Central Publication Branch, 8, Hastings Street, Calcutta.
